

## GEOFFREY J. BUTLER: SUMMERS ON OLYMPUS

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My first contact with Geoff Butler was by long distance telephone early in the spring of 1981. He wondered whether I would join him in taking a team of Canadian high school students to the International Mathematical Olympiad.

This would be the first of three occasions on which Geoff and I would collaborate in this way. Since these Olympiads constituted my main contact with Geoff and represented at least three intense months of both our lives, this paper will be devoted to a glimpse of this activity and what it reveals of Geoff, not as a researcher, but as a problem solver and friend of students.

By 1981, Canadian participation in the IMO had been mooted for many years. Begun in 1959 in Eastern Europe, the Olympiad gradually drew in Western countries including the U.S.A. in 1974. Murray Klamkin had been pressing the Canadian Mathematical Society to sponsor a Canadian entry, and the 1981 Washington location with the prospect of minimal travel expenses presented a not-to-be-missed opportunity.

Having been on the Alberta High School Mathematics Prize Examination Board for some years, Geoff was no stranger to competition activity. He became chairman of the Canadian Mathematical Olympiad (CMO) when it moved to the University of Alberta, and accepted the unexpected challenge of entering the IMO. His two obvious choices as allies, colleagues Murray Klamkin and Andy Liu, were already coaching the U.S. team, so he had to look elsewhere and came round to me.

Money had to be raised and a training session organized. We met our financial obligations with the help of the governments of Ontario and Alberta, as well as some private foundations. As for the training session, the University of Saskatchewan agreed to extend its seminar for winners of the CMO so we had almost two weeks to work with the fourteen students, eight of whom constituted the team. Let me introduce the members: Georges Gonthier, a Montreal student attending Galois' school Louis le Grand in Paris, and David Ash